

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-4. (Cancelled)

5. (Amended) The method as set forth in Claim 4 21, ~~wherein~~  
further comprising the step of:

heating said bar code label to said predetermined  
temperature level which is within the range of 100-500°F.

6. (Amended) The method as set forth in Claim 4, ~~wherein~~  
further comprising the step of:

using a ~~said~~ heat source ~~may comprise a heat~~  
~~source chosen~~ which is selected from the group comprising a  
heat lamp, an infrared heater, a microwave generator, a hot  
air generator, a laser source, and a heated platen.

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Amended) The method as set forth in Claim 7 21, ~~wherein~~  
further comprising the step of:

using said heat source comprises a plurality of  
heating elements as said heat source disposed at said work  
station.

9. (Amended) The method as set forth in Claim 7 21, further  
comprising the step of:

providing first and second entry and exit photo-  
cell systems operatively associated with said conveyor for  
controlling the conveyance of said packaging container upon  
said conveyor into and out from said work station.

10. (Original) The method as set forth in Claim 9, further  
comprising the step of:

providing a central processing unit (CPU) for controlling said conveyor in response to signals from said first and second photocell systems, and for respectively controlling energization and de-energization of said heat source when said packaging container is disposed at said work station, and when said packaging container is absent from said work station.

11. (Amended) The method as set forth in Claim ~~6~~ 21, ~~wherein~~  
further comprising the step of:

forming said work station ~~comprises as~~ an oven-type enclosure; and

conveying ~~said conveyor conveys~~ said packaging container through said oven-type enclosure.

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Amended) The apparatus as set forth in Claim ~~12~~ 22,  
wherein:

said predetermined temperature level is within the  
range of 100-500°F.

14. (Amended) The apparatus as set forth in Claim ~~12~~ 22,  
wherein:

said heat source comprises a heat source chosen  
from the group comprising a heat lamp, an infrared heater, a  
microwave generator, a hot air generator, a laser source,  
and a heated platen.

15. (Original) The apparatus as set forth in Claim 14,  
wherein:

said heat source comprises at least one heated  
platen; and

said at least one heated platen is mounted upon a  
movable support so as to be movable toward and away from  
said packaging container.

16. (Cancelled)

17. (Amended) The apparatus as set forth in Claim ~~12~~ 22,  
wherein:

said heat source comprises a plurality of heating  
elements disposed at said work station.

18. (Amended) The apparatus as set forth in Claim ~~16~~ 22,  
further comprising:

first and second entry and exit photocell systems  
operatively associated with said conveyor means for control-  
ling the conveyance of ~~said the~~ packaging container upon  
said conveyor means into and out from said work station.

19. (Amended) The apparatus as set forth in Claim 18, ~~fur-~~  
~~ther comprising~~ wherein said means for controlling said con-  
veyor means comprises:

a central processing unit (CPU) for controlling said conveyor in response to signals from said first and second photocell systems [,] ~~and for respectively controlling energization and de-energization of said heat source when said packaging container is disposed at said work station, and when said packaging container is absent from said work station.~~

20. (Amended) The apparatus as set forth in Claim ~~12~~ 22, wherein:

said work station comprises an oven-type enclosure; and

said conveyor means conveys said packaging container through said oven-type enclosure.

21. (New) A method of cancelling a bar code, previously imprinted upon a thermal-direct-printed bar code label as a result of exposing predetermined portions of said thermal-direct-printed bar code label to a predetermined temperature

level whereby said predetermined exposed portions of said thermal-direct-printed bar code label become activated and blackened, and wherein said bar code label has been subsequently affixed upon a packaging container, comprising the steps of:

providing a work station;

providing a heat source, capable of generating sufficient heat such that an object disposed within the vicinity of said heat source will be heated to said predetermined temperature level, at said work station;

actuating a conveyor so as to convey a packaging container, having a thermal-direct-printed bar code label affixed thereon and comprising a bar code pre-printed thereon as a result of thermal activation at said predetermined temperature level, to said work station;

deactuating said conveyor so as to terminate conveyance of said conveyor so as to dispose said packaging container at said work station;

actuating said heat source such that the entire expanse of said thermal-direct-printed bar code label is exposed to said heat source so as to heat said entire expanse of said thermal-direct-printed bar code label to said predetermined temperature level such that said entire ex-

panse of said thermal-direct-printed bar code label becomes blackened so as to thereby render said bar code, pre-printed upon said thermal-direct-printed bar code label, illegible and unreadable whereby said packaging container can be reused by affixing a new bar code label thereon; and

reactuating said conveyor so as to discharge said packaging container from said work station.

22. (New) Apparatus for causing the cancellation of a bar code, previously imprinted upon a thermal-direct-printed bar code label as a result of exposing predetermined portions of said thermal-direct-printed bar code label to a predetermined temperature level whereby said predetermined exposed portions of said thermal-direct-printed bar code label become thermally activated and blackened, and wherein said bar code label has been subsequently affixed upon a packaging container, comprising:

a work station;

a heat source disposed at said work station;

conveyor means for conveying a packaging container, having affixed thereon a thermal-direct-printed bar code



label which comprises a bar code preprinted thereon as a result of predetermined portions of said thermal-direct-printed bar code label having been subjected to thermal activation at a predetermined temperature level, to said work station; and

means for controlling said conveyor means so as to initially terminate conveyance of said conveyor so as to dispose the packaging container at said work station for a predetermined period of time so as to permit said heat source to heat the entire expanse of said thermal-direct-printed bar code label to said predetermined temperature level such that said entire expanse of said thermal-direct-printed bar code label becomes blackened so as to thereby render said bar code, preprinted upon said thermal-direct-printed bar code label, illegible and unreadable whereby the packaging container can be reused by affixing a new bar code label thereon, and for subsequently resuming conveyance of said conveyor means, after the packaging container has been subjected to said heat from said heat source whereby said entire expanse of said thermal-direct-printed bar code label has been blackened so as to thereby render said bar code, preprinted upon said thermal-direct-printed bar code label,

illegible and unreadable, so as to discharge said packaging container from said work station.

23. (New) The apparatus as set forth in Claim 18, wherein said central processing unit (CPU) comprises:

means for respectively controlling energization and de-energization of said heat source, when said packaging container is disposed at said work station, and when said packaging container is absent from said work station, in response to signals from said first and second photocell systems.